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# SPECIAL EDUCATION DIVISION THE DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION and the MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
Jack O'Connell, State Superintendent of Public Instruction



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of Public Instruction

# INTRODUCTION

- The purpose of this presentation is to share information on the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and the involvement of the California Department of Education (CDE), with county offices of education (COE) and Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) administrators to transform the mental health system in California on behalf of our children, youth, and transition age youth.
- The focus of this presentation is the Special Education Division (SED) work on the MHSA.



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# The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)

- California voters passed Proposition 63 in November 2004.
- It is now known as the MHSA.
- The MHSA imposes a one percent tax on Californians whose personal income exceeds one million dollars a year.
- The funds go toward the transformation of California's county mental health system.



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# MHSA BACKGROUND

1. Reduces the long-term adverse impact of untreated mental illness
2. Expands successful, innovative services to individuals more severely affected by or at risk of serious mental illness
3. Provides state and local funds to adequately meet the needs of all children and adults
4. Ensures that all funds are expended in the most cost effective manner via oversight and accountability
5. Defines serious mental illness as a condition deserving high priority



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# MHSA COMPONENTS

- Community Services and Supports
- Capital Facilities and Information Technology
- Education and Training Programs
- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Innovative Programs



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# SELPA INVOLVEMENT

- Many SELPAs are already integrated into the local MHSA planning process and several counties are involved with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration discretionary grant awards regarding integrated systems of care or juvenile justice activities.
- SELPAs are a resource to CDE staff and staff are a resource to you.





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# LOCAL COUNTY MHSA PLANS

- Stakeholders' meetings are being held at the local county level.
- Youth, parents, educators, child and family advocates, and community members can provide testimony on the local level needs for prevention and early intervention to articulate priorities for local mental to their mental health boards, including the needs of the educational systems.



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## LOCAL COUNTY MHSA PLANS CONTINUED

- Local county departments of mental health and the local mental health boards assess the unmet needs in the provision prevention and early interventions and the provision of mental health services to promote wellness, recovery, and resilience.
- Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) efforts are new services to mental health.
- PEI efforts may assist in the issue of disproportionality in special education classes.





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# WHY SERVICES IN SCHOOLS?

- Behaviors are noticed often first in the classroom.
- The President's New Freedom Commission recommended enhanced school mental health services.
- PEI can save grief to children, youth, their families, and the community as well as money.
- Mental health services to children, youth, and transition age youth assist those in general and special education classes due to emotional concerns that are barriers to academic achievement.
- Transition planning for further education or training is a mandate under the California Education Code Section 56462.



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- School mental health staff can teach children resilience to cope with their home life and their environment
- Increase school attendance
- Increase academic performance
- Increase rates of high school graduation or receipt of certification
- Increase knowledge of social problem solving skills within the context of cultural competence
- School staff can use evidence-based practices that are validated by data and research



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# CDE MHSA EFFORTS

- At the CDE, MHSA funds support staff in the Learning Support and Partnerships Division with an emphasis on PEI.
- SED staff work on Prevention and Early Intervention, Community Supports and Services, and Workforce Education and Training.



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- Work with general and special education and county mental health staff to increase collaboration
- Communicate with community based organizations and civic groups interested in the MHSA
- Attend and participate in statewide and community meetings that affect students in general and special education classes
- Provide information and act as a resource person for general and special education and mental health staff
- Address issues that affect PEI, CSS, and WET



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# What are SED's desired results?

- The overarching goal is to improve education outcomes for students with emotional or mental health needs.

SED's goals are to:

- improve the ability of school personnel and parents to identify students with mental health needs
- increase knowledge of special education personnel of mental health resources and IEP processes
- improve relationships between education and special education and county mental health



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# How can SED staff help?

- Provide information at meetings and conferences and make referrals for assistance to special educators, parents, and community based organizations
- Provide hard copy and on-line assistance with information on special education processes, including AB 3632

You can help by providing feed-back and input at the county level because you are stakeholders.



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- You can help increase knowledge of educators, parents, families, significant others of the child or youth about support for the student.





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# What does SED staff do on the MHSA?

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# NEXT STEPS

- Please contact Joan Hirose, Special Education Division, at [jhirose@cde.ca.gov](mailto:jhirose@cde.ca.gov) or by telephone at (916) 327-8877 should you need technical assistance in building local coalitions and advocacy groups working on behalf of students and their care givers.



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- We are all in this together as stakeholders, partners, communicators, collaborators, and learners.

As Margaret Mead said, “ A small group of committed people can make a difference and change the world.”

I take the liberty to change Ms. Mead’s quote to read, “A small group of committed people can make a difference and change communities and California in the



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# CLOSING

- We have high expectations for us all.
- We extend our hands out to you, educators, students, parents, organizations, and communities as partners in the transformation of the mental health system.
- Thank you, colleagues, for your attention, time, energy, passion, and hope for Californian's future.